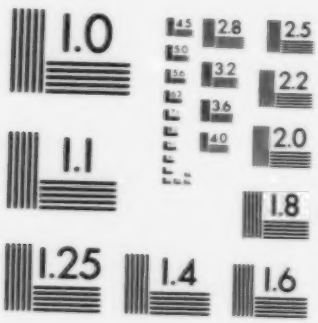
MS109

Micromedia Limited

The contents of this microfiche are copyright by the publisher of the original document. Please contact the original publisher for guidance in copyright matters.

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
STANDARD REFERENCE MATERIAL 1010a
(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

This statement was filmed with this document. If the pages of the document are less clear than this statement it is due to the poor photographic quality of the document.

NATIONAL MICROGRAPHICS ASSOCIATION

24x

Workplace Upgrading in Nova Scotia

A Project of the Literacy Division,
N.S. Department of Advanced Education and Job Training
Halifax, Nova Scotia 1990

Department of
Advanced Education
and Job Training

Workplace Upgrading in Nova Scotia

91-03042/

Table of Contents

Workplace Upgrading in Nova Scotia

Project Overview 5
Nova Scotia and Workplace Upgrading 6
Partnerships in Learning 6
Conclusion 8
Overview Workplace Programs 9

Program Profiles

1 Meat processing co-op 11
2 Giftware manufacturer 17
3 Municipal operations centre 23
4 Family-owned dairy 27
5 General store complex 31
6 Textile mill 35
7 Motel and dining room 39
8 Publishing company 45
9 Inshore fishing families 49

Workplace Upgrading in Nova Scotia

Project Overview

From August 14, 1989 to March 31, 1990, the Literacy Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Advanced Education and Job Training worked in partnership with local businesses and unions to provide programs for working Nova Scotians who wanted to upgrade their job-related reading, writing, math, problem-solving and communication skills.

The project developed out of a growing awareness that employed Nova Scotians who need and want upgrading have limited access to programs even though, as a group, they could benefit immediately from basic skills instruction. In 1989, the research report **Adult literacy, basic education and academic upgrading in Nova Scotia: The role of the Community College** made the following recommendation:

"The NSCC should be prepared to offer adult literacy, basic education and academic upgrading programs in the workplace in the same way that it provides other industry-related programs. These programs should maintain the same standards of adult education instruction and resources as those provided on campus."

With funding from Employment and Immigration Canada, the Literacy Division was able to develop and deliver ten model programs to meet the specific needs and wants of Nova Scotian employees, employers and unions. Programs were located in every region of the province, except in Cape Breton where Laubach Literacy was piloting an Industrial Tutoring Program. In total, 102 employees from the textile, goods producing, agriculture, fishing and service industries participated in the programs. Three unionized programs were actively supported by employers and unions. The participating workplaces varied in size: five employed less than 100 people; three less than 200; one less than 300 and one less than 500.

Three full-time and three part-time field staff workers were hired to carry out the project - two in the Northern Region, two in the Metro Region and two in the Southwest Region. Three permanent members of the Literacy Division staff also participated in the project - one acting as Coordinator, one working in the Valley Region and another in the Southwest Region. Their backgrounds included experience in ESL instruction, adult literacy, GED instruction, adult education, community and rural development, and volunteer literacy councils.

Professional development of the staff was a priority of the project. Field workers attended a week-long orientation, a two-day workshop and monthly staff inservice training sessions/meetings. They researched the development of workplace upgrading theory and practice in the United States, England and Canada, and were introduced to a variety of adult-oriented and workplace upgrading materials, as well as to the vast spectrum of learning and teaching styles that people employ. This exposure was essential for the development of non-standard curricula for innovative programs in Nova Scotia.

It was determined that the success of the project depended on viewing the workplace as a community of equal partners - to include employees, employers and union. Within this context, it was agreed the following principles would be the basis on which the programs would be established.

- those programs developed according to the express needs of the individual workplace would be successful;
- those programs which encouraged the involvement of all potential players - employer and union management and a cross section of employees - in every stage of the program, its development, delivery and evaluation, would be successful;
- those programs which concentrated on process, not product, would be successful;
- those programs which met participants at their present level and took them to where they wanted to go would be successful.

Following these principles demanded a flexible approach to curriculum development. Staff initially conducted an organizational needs assessment which involved interviewing a cross-section of employees as well as company and union management in order to identify what learning needs existed in the workplace and how those needs could best be met. The information gathered was then used to determine overall program goals and objectives, and subsequently to provide focus to the development of curriculum. Materials specific to the workplace - notices, newsletters, manuals, etc., and not purely generic materials - were used as the "main texts" and were converted into useful learning activities.

In the course of the project's duration, two important issues were identified. The first focused on the use of assessment and evaluation techniques. As adult educators, the staff generally felt uncomfortable using standardized tests to measure participants' levels or progress. Far too often, these tests measure a small area of knowledge, rather than the application of strategies useful for the reading and understanding of a written text.

On the other hand, staff realized the importance of quantifying as well as qualifying results. They discussed ways to obtain quantitative data, including the use of the Likert scale to rate feelings, attitudes and comfort levels, pre- and post-tests based on relevant job tasks, and miscue analysis to assess reading strategies. In one project where passing the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test was required for promotion, formal assessment testing was used.

A second issue that emerged concerned clear language and design. Staff explored the concept of communication as a shared exchange and discovered how the placement of visuals and text, design and language communicates a message of its own and thus influences the readability of a printed document. By the end of the project, program participants had produced their own booklets and staff had designed and co-authored a booklet which featured the ten programs.

Nova Scotia and Workplace Upgrading

The workplace upgrading project took into consideration the realities of the Nova Scotian economy - that is, the largely rural nature of the province, its resource-based industries, and the growing size of the service sector. Only one of the programs took place in the Halifax/Dartmouth area. Five programs were offered in towns under 10,000 population and four took place in rural areas. When broken down by industry, three programs were offered in resource-based industries, four in service industries, two in the manufacturing sector and one in publishing.

Designing a program which took into account current issues and concerns of a specific workplace increased the relevancy of the course to the employees and prevented it from being isolated from the context out of which it grew. For example, if the issue was creating a safer work environment, then the program responded by using safety materials to develop reading, writing and math skills. If the concern was a lack of teamwork among employees, then the program was designed to develop teamwork skills through teaching reading, writing and math. If the concern was that existing skills were not being used, then the program helped workers learn how to apply their skills to their work.

One phenomenon currently affecting many workplaces is a shift from a reliance on verbal communication to a stronger use of written communication. Four of the ten programs encountered this phenomenon and were established, in part, to facilitate the transition. One workplace was constantly expanding and needed to strengthen the communication process in order to overcome the distance between buildings. Another workplace had no form of reporting system in place for accidents and mechanical breakdowns. The employer at a third workplace fielded all customer inquiries in addition to his normal duties. He wanted his staff to write a manual to which they could refer instead of always referring to him. Women of inshore fishing families wanted to read and understand the Federal Fishing Income Tax Guide so that they would have more control over the financial aspects of the family business.

Demystifying print is an important step for traditionally oral communities. The publication of learner written and produced materials helped to accomplish this. Participants in four of the programs created booklets which talked about the work they do. These booklets will be used by other adult learners in basic reading and writing programs.

Partnerships in Learning

The success of the project lay not only in what the Literacy Division staff learned, but also in what the other partners - employers, employees and union - learned.

1. Staff learned that, in accordance with the "workplace as a community" concept, the program model must vary with the workplace. Each workplace demanded a unique approach and a unique program set-up. Therefore, the programs varied in length, content, methodology and structure. The only concrete model which emerged was one which allowed all players at the workplace - employee, employer, union or

staff association - to participate in course development, delivery and evaluation.

2. It was determined that the most vital way to encourage total participation and to ensure that the program was focused, was through an organizational needs assessment. To properly conduct this assessment, the employer and the union should be approached simultaneously. Failure to do so may result in one of the parties not participating. Employees and potential program participants should also be included in the process. Confidential and individual interviews work best in order to ensure that the program designed meets the real needs, not just the perceived needs of the learners.
3. Through the development and delivery of the ten programs staff identified needs related to future workplace programs including funding, space and access to participants. In addition, it became clear that greater awareness of workplace literacy must be generated among the business, labour and union sectors, the educational community, including the Community College system, development commissions and the community at large.
4. Instructors should come from the community in which the program is offered. They should be familiar with non-traditional teaching methods, have experience in curriculum development, and feel comfortable with management, labour and unions. They should have a thorough orientation and on-going professional development and should have the opportunity to meet on a regular basis.

Employees, employers and unions discovered that alternative learning opportunities exist and that they can have an active role in tailoring programs to meet their needs. Employers and unions learned that providing incentives in the form of release time or extra pay encourages employee participation. They also learned that participants need full support from all levels of company and union management.

Unions discovered that workplace upgrading is possible to accomplish, particularly in partnership with the employer. The costs are manageable for a union local and the benefits are positive.

One employer offers this advice to those considering offering a workplace upgrading course:

- Do a needs survey - what do your staff want?
- Support it financially, i.e. pay or part-pay for people's time.
- Conduct it off premises.
- Be in for the long term when it comes to upgrading/training.

Another employer comments:

"If the company had to pay a great deal of money in order to have their employees take workplace upgrading, it would be a benefit to them in the long run."

Employees who participated in the programs learned what they wanted and needed to know to feel more at ease with their job. Progress in reading, writing and math were measured, in most cases, through informal methods such as comparing early writing samples with more recent ones or using adapted application of miscue analysis.

Gains were reported in basic reading, writing and math, as well as progress in writing personal stories, thought organization, completing job tasks requiring basic skills, grammer usage, punctuation, spelling, verbal communication, reading for meaning, locating information, problem-solving and being more critical towards one's own work, i.e. proofreading. In the one program that used formal testing, all participants passed the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test and most made an improvement of at least one reading level as measured by the Canadian Adult Achievement Test.

Sample comments from participants include:

"These sessions have been useful to me in bettering my skills in writing."

"I got praise from the production manager when I wrote up a memo requesting one of my staff be hired on full time. She said it was one of the best write ups she's read in a long time. All the right information and in the proper order highlighted."

"I enjoy being able to express myself and no one laughing at me, but seeming to have the same problems too."

"I have found these sessions have been quite useful for me. They have led to a better understanding of what a discerning reader might look for."

"Now, I find I'm picking up ads and looking for mistakes more. Usually, you just pick up an ad and do it without looking for mistakes. But, now I notice more."

"I have learned to locate information faster."

"I use a dictionary now when I'm not sure of the meaning of a word."

"The course was very useful and may help when I go for my GED, besides helping me at work and home with grammar and communication skills."

"These sessions have made me more confident at work relating to management and employees alike."

"The material was relevant to my work and was presented so well that it helped me do my job better and to look at myself more clearly."

"I would tell my employer that because of the course I'm more safety minded, better able to communicate both through speech and paper and more aware of what is going on around me."

"I learned a lot about different things, such as WHMIS and filling out forms. I truly think it has helped me to become more aware."

Above all, participants gained a renewed confidence in their ability to learn and to contribute to their work environment. Using the context of the workplace as the basis for the programs enabled participants to become more aware of their workplace, the work carried out, and how their job tasks fit into the whole work process. In general, people want to know and understand the world around them in order to help them attach validity to what they are doing.

This expanded awareness resulted in fuller participation: for some, this meant increased participation in training; for others, increased participation in the workplace, such as serving on committees or assuming more responsibility.

To conclude, here are more comments made by program participants.

"These sessions help me to deal with problems in the workplace more efficiently. It has also helped me take on more responsibility and advance myself in my job."

"I've learned more training wouldn't hurt me. I've also learned the views of my other employees are a lot like my own."

"I have learned that more training in writing skills and communication would help me out."

"Working with others I've found helps expand my knowledge and views of our workplace. It is also a good way to talk over problems and suggestions."

"If I want to know or learn anything, or just want something, now I have the knowledge to go for it myself."

"Before the workplace was just a place to work, now it is a place to go and find new challenges, learn new things, a place to give all I've got to my work."

Conclusion

Based on the ten model programs which were the result of a research project, the Literacy Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Advanced Education and Job Training sees workplace literacy and upgrading programs as an opportunity for working Nova Scotians to improve the reading, writing, and math skills they "need or want to get on with the rest of their lives" and to play a larger role in their participation at the workplace.

The following recommendations are made for the future facilitation of workplace literacy and upgrading programs by government, employers and unions.

- Involve all players at the workplace as partners in program development, delivery and evaluation. Employee, employer and union input ensures that the program meets the needs and wants of the participants.
- Encourage the design of programs which help participants to feel more at ease with and more confident in their work environment.
- Promote the development and the presentation of programs in a way that is relevant to workers. To do this, use workplace materials in curriculum development, relate the immediate issues and concerns of the workplace to the programs, and present programs as educational training or workplace learning, not as literacy training or basic skills training.
- Promote the integration of literacy and upgrading into existing training programs or training plans.
- View workplace literacy and upgrading as a way to enhance the workplace, not as a panacea for workplace problems.

Overview Workplace Programs

Region	Industry	Total Number of Employees	Number of Participants	Union or Non-union	Age Range	Less Than Grade 9	Grade 9-12 Without High School Cert.	Graduated High School	Some Post-Secondary	Unknown
Valley	food processing	115	7	union	25-53	2	3	—	1	1(ESL)
Northern	giftware manfacturer	220	22	non-union	18-44	3	14	4	1	
Metro	municipal	135	6	union	28-55	not available				
Southwest:	dairy	33	10	non-union	22-55	—	4	2	2	2
	textile manufacturer	440	5	union	30-37	2	1	1	—	2
	publishing	119	26	non-union	20-55	most completed grade 12 — some had post-secondary experience				
Northwest	motel	58	10	non-union	25-45	1	5	2		
Eastern	retail/restaurant	18	5	non-union	20-48		5 (at least grade 11)			
	fishing	—	4	non-union			3			1

1 Meat Processing Co-op

Program Summary

Six workers at a meat processing plant and one worker's wife participated in a basic reading and writing program. Located in the Valley region of Nova Scotia, the plant forms part of one of the largest co-ops in the Atlantic region.

Management and union personnel sponsored this program because they felt it was important to the workers on a personal level. They recognized that little or no change in the workers' work situation would result. Plant promotion is based on seniority only and all workers receive the same hourly wage. They also realized that such a course would have little visible impact on the workplace since most job tasks are completed manually. Their reason for sponsoring the course was intrinsically motivated. They hoped the workers would be able to participate more fully in the workplace and in the rest of their lives as a result of improving their reading and writing skills.

Course participants met at a local teacher's resource centre one evening a week for three hours. Management paid the participants their regular wage for one hour each session and the union local did the same for a second hour.

Two participants were learning English as a second language. Four participants were told at an early age that they were slow learners. The goals of the program were to help participants develop a personal sense of self-worth and to raise literacy skills to a point where questions and independent reading and writing were possible.

As a result of the course, one man says that he no longer has to ask for help in filling out job transfer forms. He helps other workers fill them out. Another man now reads notices posted at work independently. A supervisor has less trouble filling out forms. When passing out pay cheques, he feels more comfortable reading people's names. For the first time, one man read directions on a paint stripper can. He realized that, although he had followed oral directions, his use of the product had been improper.

Statement of Process

The county where the co-op is located has a population of 53,275 (1986c). Forty-nine percent of the labour force has not completed high school. The agriculture industry is the fourth largest employer in the county. The co-op is a significant employer as is a tire manufacturer, a potato chip factory and a food packaging company. The county's unemployment rate is lower than the provincial average.

The program co-ordinator is experienced in working with basic literacy instruction. She selected the co-op as a site for a workplace program because basic literacy was a primary need.

This co-op supports the development of co-ops outside the country. Aware of and open to development issues, the co-op is also committed to the development of its own community. This is why it sponsored a workplace program for its employees. One of the co-op's managers had a relative who had benefited from a similar opportunity.

There had recently been a struggle in the workplace over a change in unions. Many worker relationships were destroyed.The local of the new union felt that co-sponsoring a workplace program would help mend negative feelings. The local considered this to be a project that it could afford and did not go through the provincial or national union for approval or support.

Both the employer and the union were impressed with each other's involvement in sponsoring a basic reading and writing program for employees.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	A meat processing co-op
Location	The Valley area of Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	Canadian Auto Workers'
Product/Services	Poultry, eggs, beef
General Information	The co-op was established in 1943 as a marketing co-op for Valley producers. At that time, it produced eggs and fowl. In the 1950s, it expanded into the processing and marketing of chickens and in the 1970s, it acquired a broiler breeder company and hatchery, an egg production company and feed mill, and a pork and beef packaging company. Of all non-financial co-ops in Canada, this co-op currently ranks 22nd in sales (with annual sales of $89 million) and 5th in terms of sales per member/owner (at $1.25 million). It is the 4th largest co-op in the Atlantic region, where the majority of its sales take place.

Employees

a. total number	500 full-time, 115 at the poultry processing plant
b. men	70%
c. women	30%
d. minorities	1
e. age range	17 - 64, most are between 30 - 35
f. required educational level	None
g. pay rate	$10.45/hour for all jobs

Program Information

a. number of courses	1
b. form of recruitment	Plant-wide publicity
c. day and time	Tuesday, 6:30-8:30pm Starting Jan. 9: 6:00 - 9:00pm
d. location	A teacher's resource centre, provided through the local school board Continuing Education office.
e. number of sessions	18
f. total course hours	74
g. initial statement of needs	Management personnel and the Union were both interested in providing an opportunity for employees to increase personal development and workplace awareness.
h. management contribution	Employer paid 1 hour's wage on top of regular salary.
i. union contribution	Union paid 1 hour's wage.

Participant Information

a. number of participants — 7 total, 6 employees and 1 spouse (former employee)
   1. men — 6
   2. women — 1
   3. special needs — 2 (English as a Second Language)
   4. age range — 25 - 53
b. rate of attrition — 0
c. last grade completed — 1 - grade 1; 2 - grade 10; 1 - grade 3; 1 - post secondary (ESL); 1 - grade 9; 1 - unknown (ESL)
d. how long out of school — 2 - 10 years; 2 - 20 years; 1 - 28 years; 2 - unknown
e. previous upgrading — None
f. general information — All participants, except the ESL students, had been told at an early age that they were slow learners. This was one of the initial comments participants made to the instructor about themselves.

Organizational Needs Assessment

The organizational needs assessment process included meetings with the Vice President of Operations and with the Human Resources Manager of the co-op, with the union local president and representative, and with potential program participants. Management personnel were very receptive to a program from the beginning. They did not feel the program would respond to any immediate workplace needs such as promotion or safety. They did feel that the program would be useful to employees on a personal level. Meetings with management personnel further revealed that the program could not take place on work time. This would unnecessarily interrupt production. Furthermore, employees preferred not to be seen in their work clothes because the work is fairly messy. Recognizing the extra costs (gas, childcare) that holding the program off work premises would incur, the company offered to pay participants for one hour of every two class hours. Management felt this would also give employees an extra incentive to participate.

The program co-ordinator informed the local union of the proposed program and was told the issue would be discussed at the next union meeting. When this matter did not get on the agenda at the meeting, the program co-ordinator met directly with the union representative. He responded very positively to the proposal. The union was involved in several projects similar to this one in Ontario. The union local expressed interest in the personal development of the employees and recognized that literacy is a very important issue. It suspected that the poor turnout at meetings was in part due to a literacy problem. The union was impressed by the employer's commitment to financially co-sponsor the program. The union then made a decision to pay the employees for the second hour of the program. This support began in January, at which time the course was extended to three hours a week.

Employees highlighted areas where they would like to increase their reading and writing skills. Job transfer forms, bulletin board notices, union information and safety signs were specifically mentioned. After the class was formed, it decided it would like to write job descriptions for positions at the plant.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To boost employee morale.

Goal: To develop personal sense of self-worth.

Goal: To raise literacy skills to a point where questions, independent reading and writing were possible.

Objective: To read and understand workplace notices for job openings, changes, etc. To facilitate the filling out of application, medical and compensation forms.

Goal: To increase involvement in and understanding of union activities.

Objective: To improve attendance at meetings.

2 Giftware Manufacturer

Program Summary

Twenty-two employees of a giftware manufacturer in Northern Nova Scotia participated in a four month program designed to improve on-the-job reading, writing and communication skills. The program was held on site and was offered to two groups of employees. It took place one hour before and one hour after shift change in order to accommodate both day and night shift employees. Participants received one hour of paid release time and contributed the second hour themselves. They completed jobs in six different areas of the plant. One third of them held leadhand positions.

Interviews conducted at the plant established several needs. Job advancement was not possible without a grade twelve or its equivalent. Employees wishing to advance wanted to upgrade before taking a grade twelve equivalency course (GED). Management felt that employees needed to learn how to follow through on a project in a written form. The employees themselves wished to better their writing skills. In a plant-wide survey, 29 employees requested help with writing reports and 17 with writing memos. Finally, employees expressed a desire to learn about each other's jobs and how to work more effectively as a team.

The program co-ordinator developed a curriculum based on these needs and others. The curriculum focused on communicating in writing requests, complaints, machine breakdowns, production problems, safety and health hazards, and accident reports. It also emphasized team problem-solving and communication skills.

Of the program, one participant commented, "I find these sessions help me in writing up better memos, assessments and any other writing projects I have to do. Most importantly, they are teaching me how to communicate better with others in my department and in the other departments." Another participant said, "These sessions help me to deal with problems in the workplace more efficiently. They also help me take on more responsibility and advance myself in my job."

Statement of Process

The county where this manufacturer is located has a population of 34, 819 (1986c). Forty-nine percent of the labour force has not completed high school. The manufacturing industry has the second highest rate of participation in the county. Significant employers include a salt mine and various health care facilities. The unemployment rate far exceeds the provincial average.

The program co-ordinator selected this workplace because it values the educational development of its employees.

This manufacturer is an innovative workplace where people work more in teams than through a line of command. Therefore, it values employees who are problem-solvers. The plant is currently undergoing expansion. New machinery is being purchased. In the future, employees will need to be able to monitor a more automated type of production. As the company expands and employees are moved into separate facilities, a stronger reliance on written communication will be needed. More employees will be hired and existing employees will be promoted if they have the necessary reading and writing skills to complete new job tasks. In view of this changing situation, the employer wanted to sponsor a workplace upgrading program for interested employees.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	A manufacturer of pewter and silver giftware
Location	A village on the Gulf Shore Northern Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	None
Product/Services	Pewter and silver giftware including such items as frames, candlesticks, holloware, wall and tree ornaments, jewelry, bookmarks, etc.
General Information	This manufacturing company was begun in 1978 in a farmhouse. The first workshop was built in 1980 and housed 8-10 employees. The original building has been expanded 3 times, a new shipping building has opened (1988) and another facility is currently under construction. The personal interest of the owners is to "challenge the limits of possibility". The fact that the company is the largest producer of pewter giftware in North America attests to this. Winner of several Export Achievement Awards, the company markets its giftware products in North America Europe, Japan and Australia. In 1988, it won a Small Business Award for Excellence in Canada.
Employees	
a. total number	220
b. men	30%
c. women	70%
d. age range	27-30
e. required educational level	None
f. pay rate	$8.25/hour
Program Information	
a. number of courses	2
b. form of recruitment	Voluntary, plant-wide publicity
c. day and time	Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-5:30pm
d. location	Resource Centre, on site
e. number of sessions	16
f. total course hours	32
g. initial statement of needs	Management initially identified the need for employees to upgrade basic skills, to follow through on written projects, to increase the promotion pool and to develop monitoring skills demanded by automation.
h. management contribution	Employer paid 1 hour each session

Participant Information

a. number of participants: 22
   1. men: 6
   2. women: 16
   3. minorities: 0
   4. age range: 18-44, average age was 29

b. rate of attrition: 0

c. last grade completed:

3 - grade 8	3 - grade 11
3 - grade 9	4 - grade 12
8 - grade 10	1 - post-secondary

d. how long out of school: Most participants had been out of school 10 or more years. Only four people had been out of school for a shorter period.

e. previous upgrading/coursework: All but 6 participants had been involved in previous upgrading courses. 1 had taken a BTSD course. 4 others had either taken a GED course or had worked on it through home study. 1 had taken a communication course, 2 a business education course and 2 a job-readiness training course. Other courses taken included aerobics, ceramics, cosmetology, food service, first aid, home nursing, hunter safety and sanitation.

f. general information: 20 participants worked in the production department: 6 were casters, 6 were buffers, 3 were grinders, 2 were tumblers and 3 were assemblers. 2 worked in the product development department. 14 worked the night shift and 8 worked the day shift. 2 were assistant lead hands, 7 were lead hands and 1 was a senior lead hand. Many of the participants had negative school experiences and felt that they did not receive enough individual attention.

Organizational Needs Assessment

The program co-ordinator's first look at the upgrading needs of employees at the manufacturer revealed two concerns. First, several employees identified GED instruction as a training need on a March 1989 interest survey. Second, management personnel, in preliminary interviews, expressed the concern that, as the company was literally changing everyday — i.e., increase in personnel, expansion of plant facilities, creation of new positions — that employees needed an opportunity to update their skills. The formal assessment included a plant tour and twelve interviews with employees of varying rank from the product development and production departments.

During these interviews, people talked about developing clearer writing skills, improving spelling and learning how to order words properly. They wanted to see increased and better interdepartmental communication, a stronger sense of teamwork and team spirit among all employees and a broadening of employee horizons. There were concerns expressed that accident reports were frequently neglected and often lacked useful details, that automation necessitated a skills update and that some people were not ready for promotion because they felt uneasy about increased reading and writing responsibilities.

The interviews also highlighted existing obstacles to programming. Some employees worked 10 hour shifts, 4 days a week. Many of them sat all day. Consequently, after their shift, they were ready to go home. One third of the employees travelled 20 miles to work. If the course took place after work, many working parents would have to pay a babysitter longer. Programming could not take place completely on work time because this would slow down production. Interviewees suggested scheduling the program on Mondays and Wednesdays around the shift change. This would enable both day and night shift employees to participate.

The interest survey played a valuable role in the needs assessment process. The completed surveys (106 returned out of 163 distributed) confirmed a desire among employees to improve work-related reading, writing, math and communication skills. 17 requested writing memos, 29 writing reports, 20 filling out forms, 11 reading, 15 reading and writing letters, 12 understanding instructions and 17 hazard/accident reporting. Also, 15 requested math and 23 requested inventory. 51 people in total responded that they were interested in a workplace upgrading course.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To build and apply strategies for effective on-the-job teamwork.

Objective: To increase awareness of group dynamics.
To improve interpersonal skills.
To build team problem-solving skills.

Goal: To develop written communication skills.

Objective: To use forms as a communication tool at work.

Goal: To achieve clarity and variety in written expression.

Objective: To learn editing techniques.
To develop relevant grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.

Goal: To formulate strategies for reading comprehension.

To use self-monitoring skills during the reading process.

Goal: To prepare for a GED course.

Objective: To help interested participants determine where they are in relation to getting their GED.

3 Municipal Operations Centre

Program Summary

Six workers from a municipal operations centre upgraded their reading and writing skills in a four month program.The participants met twice a week for four hours in a community centre. Management paid the participants for one hour of every session attended. The local union played an active role in getting the program approved and implemented.

Management and the union saw this program as an opportunity to help raise the employees' awareness of health and safety issues at the workplace. The program co-ordinator, management personnel and the union determined that the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and other health and safety materials would be used to encourage a group of employees to develop fluent reading and writing skills.

Two of the participants had been categorized as learning disabled in school and two other participants had not been encouraged. In order to help these men see that they were not to blame for their current literacy problems, the program co-ordinator discussed participants' educational background and developed a curriculum which centred around re-writing hard to understand information documents and producing, as a group, clear language materials. In this way, the participants increased their confidence in dealing with written texts.

During the course, participants designed a safety poster specific to their workplace which the local union is going to produce. They also wrote and produced a booklet which explains and illustrates in a readable format the Occupational Health and Safety Act. They divided the booklet into three areas: **The Right to Know** which discusses WHMIS, **The Right to Refuse** which discusses a worker's right to refuse unsafe work and **The Right to be Involved** which discusses health and safety committees in the workplace.

Statement of Process

The urban area in which this workplace is located has a lower rate of unemployment than the provincial average. Thirty-eight percent of the labour force has not completed high school. Business and personal services, public administration and national defence sectors are the largest employers in the area.

A number of years prior to the implementation of this program, the program co-ordinator, an educator and active trade unionist, had approached this workplace about delivering a course similar to the program just delivered. The union stood divided in its support but the employer offered full co-operation.

This time, both the union and the employer offered their full support in sponsoring a workplace upgrading program.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	City, Operations Centre
Location	Industrial park
Union/Staff Association	Union representing workers for municipal government
Product/Services	Maintains and repairs municipal infrastructure, e.g., roads, parks, water and sewage, snow removal, etc.
Employees	
a. total number	135
b. men	98%
c. women	2%
d. age range	Early 20s to 50s
e. required educational level	Grade 10 for new employees
f. pay rate	$12 - 15/hour
Program Information	
a. number of courses	1
b. form of recruitment	Through shop stewards
c. day and time	Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00 - 5:00pm
d. location	A community centre
e. number of sessions	37
f. total course hours	74
g. initial statement of needs	Employer felt a certain obligation and personal need to provide WHMIS training and basic skills upgrading. Union requested a course to deal with WHMIS and other safety issues.
h. management contribution	Employer paid 1 hour of each session.
Participant Information	
a. number of participants	6
1. men	6
2. women	0
3. age range	28 - 55
b. rate of attrition	25% :
c. last grade completed	—
d. how long out of school	2 - 5 years; 1 - 20 years; 1 - 25 years; 1- 30 years; 1 -35 years
e. previous upgrading/coursework	All had taken various short courses and safety training provided by the City. Two had participated in shop steward training.
f. general information	The class operated from basic to intermediate levels. Two men in the class told the instructor they were categorized as learning disabled in school and 2 others said that they were not smart.

Organizational needs assessment

Workplace needs at this municipal operations centre were determined by consulting with the union, front line management and the participants. The initial contact and discussion regarding course organization and content was with the union executive. It was followed by a meeting with the operation centre's management and union representatives. This second meeting was intended to obtain management co-operation on course content as decided by the union. Once there was union/management agreement, a meeting was held with the participants to discuss the program and to determine their commitment to the proposed content and their specific needs. There was unanimous support for the union's proposal.

The course content agreed to was Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), a recently legislated information delivery system for hazardous substances used at the workplace. WHMIS has three components: 1) hazardous symbols and warning labels displayed on hazardous materials containers, 2) Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) which provide detailed information on each substance, and 3) worker training. Legislation requires the employer to develop and deliver an educational program to enable workers to gain a practical understanding of WHMIS. The project team met mid-way through the course to evaluate progress and to decide on additional content to follow the WHMIS module. It was decided to concentrate on the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To increase trainees' confidence in dealing with various texts.

Objective: Encourage useful reading strategies, e.g. predict and confirm. semantic, syntactic and graphophonic clues.

Objective: To provide an opportunity for trainees to read and write for concrete purposes, i.e. to describe a process, provide information, and fill out forms.

Goal: To produce clear language material in order to improve the WHMIS information delivery system.

Objective: To develop readable texts based on Material Safety Data Sheets.

Objective: To determine the information specifically required by the workers of the Operations Centre.

Objective: To determine the formats most useful for the workers at the Operations Centre.

Objective: To allow the trainees to decide on the content and formats for the clear language project.

4 Family-Owned Dairy

Program Summary

Ten employees of a well-established dairy in southwest Nova Scotia took part in an eight-week upgrading program. They met after work in a local high school for two hours a week. Management paid participants their regular hourly rate for each session attended.

Initial interviews with dairy management personnel and potential course participants revealed that little reading and writing were actually carried out in the workplace. They also highlighted, however, certain job tasks where a skills update in reading and math would be useful. These included reading and understanding Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) materials, particularly Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS); making fuller use of machine manuals; understanding liquid metric measure when using chemicals; and correctly using the Pearson Square formula for mixing blend and chocolate milk. The latter involved the teaching of fractions, ratios, proportions and solving for an unknown. The program co-ordinator designed the course to meet these specific needs.

As a result of the course, management and employees increased their awareness of how to use chemicals safely in the workplace. Needed safety equipment was purchased. All chemicals were properly labelled. Participants developed strategies for reading machine manuals and began to see ways that writing could be used in the workplace, i.e. to record breakdowns. One employee now keeps a written record of all accidents which take place at the dairy.

The program co-ordinator found it interesting to note that participants with previous coursework attended every session and indicated a desire to take a grade twelve equivalency course (GED). Two other participants of equal educational background but without additional trades training dropped out of the course. All employees who completed the final evaluation survey expressed a desire to take another work-related upgrading program.

Statement of Process

The dairy is located in a county with a population of 27,100 (1986c). Fifty-three percent of the labour force has not completed high school. The area has a diversified economy and, therefore, has a lower unemployment rate than the provincial average. The agriculture industry is the ninth largest employer in the county which has 143 farms. Other significant employers are a textile manufacturer, a tin mine and the fishing industry on which the stability of the economy is dependent.

The program co-ordinator chose this site because, being a farmer himself, he understood the nature of work done there. Active in the local Federation of Agriculture, he already knew the family that ran the dairy.

The milk and dairy product industry is very competitive. While the number of milk operations in the province has increased, the county's dairy farm population has decreased. This particular dairy processing plant has had to fight off outside competitors. Therefore, the employer was very interested in sponsoring a workplace upgrading program to make his workforce more competitive. Because of the isolation of the area, the continuation of this dairy processing plant means the continuation of local dairy farms that otherwise would have to truck their milk to processors too far away.

Isolation also prevents many employers from sending their employees away for training. Offering an in-house program resolved this problem for this particular employer.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	A dairy
Location	Southwest Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	None
Product/Services	Homogenized, 2%, skim, blend and chocolate milk, whipping cream and fruit drinks
General Information	The dairy is a family operated business which was incorporated in 1956. Now completely automated, the dairy collects milk from thirteen area dairy farms. It sells approximately 80,000 litres of milk per week within three counties.
Employees	
a. total number	33
b. men	32
c. women	1
d. age range	Approxmiately 30 years old
e. required educational level	None
f. pay rate	$10.00 for production workers
Program Information	
a. number of courses	1
b. form of recruitment	Management/employee meeting
c. day and time	Tuesday, 7:00 - 9:00pm
d. location	Local high school
e. number of sessions	8
f. total course hours	16
g. initial statement of needs	The company initially identified the need among employees to improve listening and speaking skills, to develop job-related math skills, to use chemicals safely and effectively and to improve writing skills.
h. management contribution	Hourly rate to employees for each two hours of attendance.
Participant Information	
a. number of participants	10
1. men	9
2. women	1
3. minorities	0
4. age range	22 - 55
b. rate of attrition	30%. One participant dropped the course because of health reasons. Two participants dropped the course for personal reasons.
c. last grade completed	3 - grade 9 1 - grade 11 2 - grade 12 2 - post-secondary Others are unknown
d. how long out of school	Participants had been out of school from as little as 4 years to as many as 35 years.
e. previous upgrading/coursework	Several had taken short courses which were connected with the dairy industry. One had taken a two-year small gas engine course and another had taken a two-year motor vehicle course at the local vocational school.
f. general information	Participants with previous coursework attended every session of the program and indicated a desire to take a GED course. Other participants of equal educational background but without additional trades training dropped out of the course. In the program, participants valued job-related knowledge and skills over generic, academic skills.

Organizational Needs Assessment

The needs assessment process at the dairy involved two interviews with the General Manager and Production Manager of the dairy, a tour of the workplace and subsequent discussion with the laboratory technician, and two interview sessions with production employees prior to the commencement of the program.

Management identified the proper use of chemicals as a primary concern. Precise measurement and being able to read and understand the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) were particular skills mentioned. Management also identified reading, understanding, and making use of machine manuals for the homogenizer and the pasteurizer as another priority for a program.

The tour of the workplace and a discussion with the laboratory technician revealed that the production process is mostly automated. Sophisticated machines and the use of chemicals dominate the workplace processes. There was little reading, writing or mathematical computation at the dairy in connection with the production process. The lab technician felt that employees could benefit from a program concentrating on chemical safety and reading machine manuals. She suggested that a review of metric measure, Celsius temperature reading, the "Pearson Square" and an inventory formula might be useful to the production employees.

Employees expressed a desire to know more about the chemicals that they were using. There was no knowledge that a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical was on file at the dairy. The employees had very few suggestions to make regarding workplace reading, writing and math because they were doing their work without having to utilize these skills. When the possibility of learning to read and to use a machine manual was mentioned, most employees expressed an interest. The same held true for metric measure and math concepts relevant to dairy processes.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To improve the reading of technical materials.

Objective: To read and understand the MSD sheets of chemicals used in dairy processing.

Objective: To read and understand the Plate Heat Exchanger Manual.

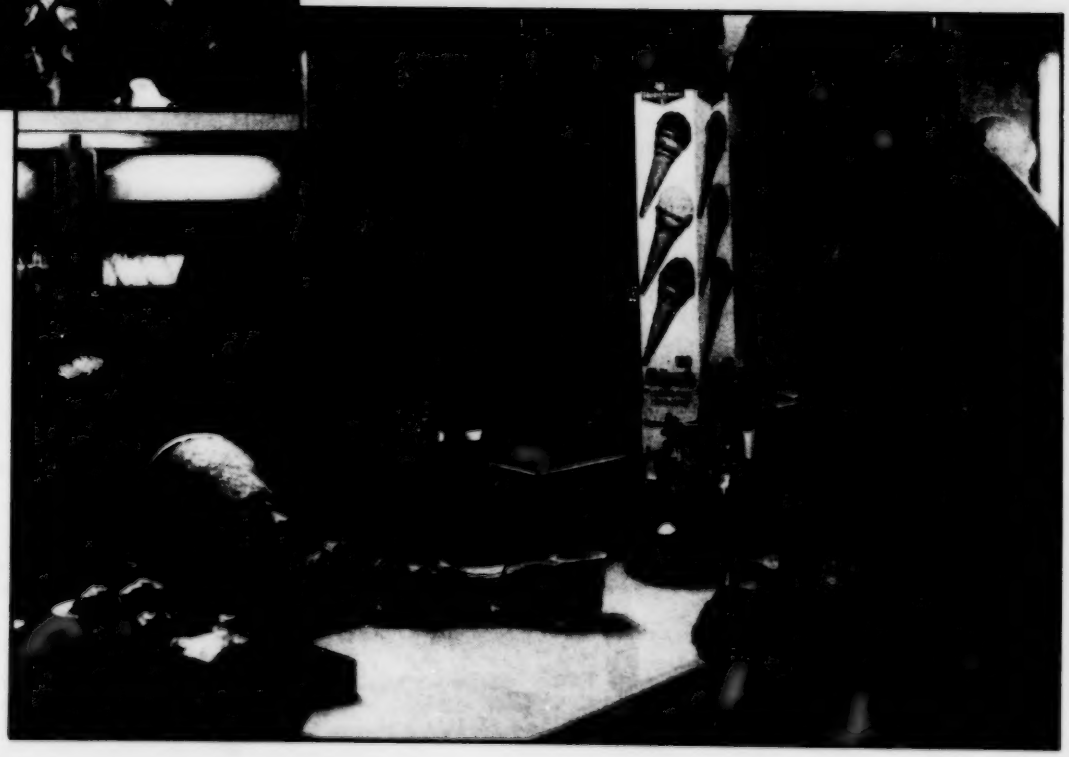
Objective: To read and understand the Homogenizer Manual.

Goal: To develop math skills in metric measure.

Objective: To understand vocabulary, numerical relationships and the importance of precision when using the liquid metric measuring system.

Goal: To develop writing skills for short reports.

5. General Store Complex



Program Summary

Five employees at a family-owned general store complex on the Eastern Shore took part in a five-month upgrading course. Originating as a dance hall in the 1930s, the complex now provides a variety of services to the community and to tourists. It houses a hardware store, a post office, an insurance office, a dining room, a coffee shop, a gas bar and a motel. The course was held for dining room and coffee shop employees. It took place on site once a week during work hours.

In addition to managing the business, the owner traditionally handled all customer inquiries and requests. The business is now too large to continue in this manner. The owner wanted his employees to explore ways in which written communication could improve the workplace.

The participants decided the most effective way to do this was to produce a user-friendly manual which would contain quick reference information needed to respond to customer inquiries. This manual would replace an out-dated manual rarely used by the employees. The latter gave only general customer relations information and contained no visuals or diagrams.

All the information included in the manual related directly to the workplace. Employees now refer to the manual for information instead of asking the owner. They can read about how to use the new intercom system or get safety tips from the RCMP. Visuals and diagrams complement the text when necessary. Word-of-mouth recipes are included in the manual in an effort to standardize the product served the customer and, for the first time, the history of the workplace has been committed to print.

This project has helped raise employee awareness. It helped them to understand effective customer relations and it encouraged them to work co-operatively. Most of all, the course offered the participants the choice of writing as a more permanent form of expression.

Statement of Process

The program co-ordinator approached the owner of the general store because she knew him to be a community-minded person. He had previously provided meeting space for a rural education and development program in which she had participated as a tutor and co-ordinator. The owner values education and enjoys contributing to the community in this way. The fact that classroom space was available in the workplace was another reason for selecting the site, since meeting space is very hard to find in communities along the Eastern Shore.

Made up of pockets of communities, this shoreline has a very warm and hospitable atmosphere. Business is slow-paced and there is little commercial development. People prefer the unspoiled beauty of their area to the construction of new industry. However, the lack of jobs is frustrating. If not fishing, most residents must commute to a nearby urban centre for employment.

The proximity of the urban centre is fortunate in terms of employment, but unfortunate in that it overshadows the uniqueness of the area. In census and other data, the Eastern Shore is lumped together with a larger urban area. Many programs are not offered here because similar ones are being offered too close by.

The general store complex also suffers from being too close to an urban centre. Once the hub of the community, the store is being bypassed more and more by people who travel to where groceries and other items can be purchased at a lower cost. Hope rests in a new resort area being developed nearby. The owner, realizing a need to increase business, feels he has a lot to gain from being close to this development. One reason for his openness to sponsoring a workplace program may have been his desire for a more competitive workforce. There is a fear that the family-owned business is too old-fashioned to serve a new summer clientele. At present, this business offers a very personable service where customers are known by name. The owner does not want to conduct business in a more modern way if this personal quality will be lost.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	A general store
Location	The Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	None
Product/Services	General store, hardware store, post office, insurance office, coffee shop, dining room, gas bar, 9 unit motel and food concessions at a local beach
General Information	The general store serves 8 small villages (population of approximately 600) in the area which is commonly referred to as the "Loop". In general, employed people in the area are either fishermen or commute to a nearby urban centre. The store is a family-owned business which began as a dance hall and canteen in 1932. It developed during the 1940s to include a post office, dining room, overnight cabins, a store and gas pumps. In the 1950s, the cabins were replaced by a 9 unit motel. In the 1970s, a new and larger building was built. This is the present facility and it now houses general and hardware stores, a coffee shop, a dining room, a post office and an insurance office.
Employees	
a. total number	18 (15 full-time, 3 part-time)
b. men	8
c. women	10
d. age range	Average age is 30 - 45 years old
e. required educational level	None
f. pay rate	$4.50 - 7.50/hour
Program Information	
a. number of courses	1
b. form of recruitment	Participation was encouraged by the department supervisor. She made arrangements for their shifts to be covered.
c. day and time	Wednesday, 1:00-3:00pm
d. location	On-site
e. number of sessions	18
f. total course hours	36
g. initial statement of needs	The employer stated a need for increased employee awareness around customer relations and for more staff teamwork and co-operation.
h. management contribution	Employer provided total paid release time
Participant Information	
a. number of participants	5
1. men	0
2. women	5
3. age range	20 - 48
b. rate of attrition	0
c. last grade completed	Participants had completed at least grade 11.
d. how long out of school	Participants had been out of school from as little as 4 years to as many as 30 years.
e. previous upgrading	One had taken management training coursework.
f. general information	All participants worked in the dining room and coffee shop department. They had a common goal of producing a user-friendly employee manual.

Organizational needs assessment

The owner was initially reluctant to commit himself to a workplace program, although following the first meeting, he agreed to consider the idea. At a later date, the program co-ordinator returned to the workplace with a written description of what the Department of Advanced Education and Job Training was in a position to offer to local employers. He promised to read it and to give a reply. When contacted again, he affirmed that he would like to see such a program implemented at his workplace. The program co-ordinator began to set up interview times that would fit the employees' work schedules.

During the interviews, the employees expressed a myriad of needs which were categorized under five headings: communication skills, written communication skills, reading, math and cross departmental training.

Following these interviews, the program co-ordinator met once more with the owner. He had already stated a need for staff members to realize the importance of customer relations as well as of teamwork and co-operation. He mentioned that he would like the department manuals put out by management to be more widely used. This would help his employees to act more independently, instead of directing all the problems they encountered towards himself. At this time, it occurred to them that it might be useful for the employees to have some input into producing their own manual.

With this idea in mind, the program co-ordinator arranged a project team meeting. In attendance were two employees, the owner and herself. She presented the idea of the employee-produced manual to the employees present and they thought it was a workable idea. It was discovered that the dining room and coffee shop employees would be most interested in participating. Given that only one department would participate, the program co-ordinator planned to compare and contrast the use of the employer manual to that of the learner-produced manual. Her theory was that the employees would be very proud of "their" manual and would use it frequently. She thought that if the employees saw their job descriptions in black and white and if they knew exactly what was expected of them, they would be happier and more productive employees.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To produce an employee manual for the dining room and coffee shop.

Objective: To develop research skills, including the ability to transfer research into written form.

Objective: To develop awareness of producing a printed document, i.e. formatting, designing and proofreading.

Objective: To develop teamwork and co-operation through discussion, role-playing and group brainstorming and writing.

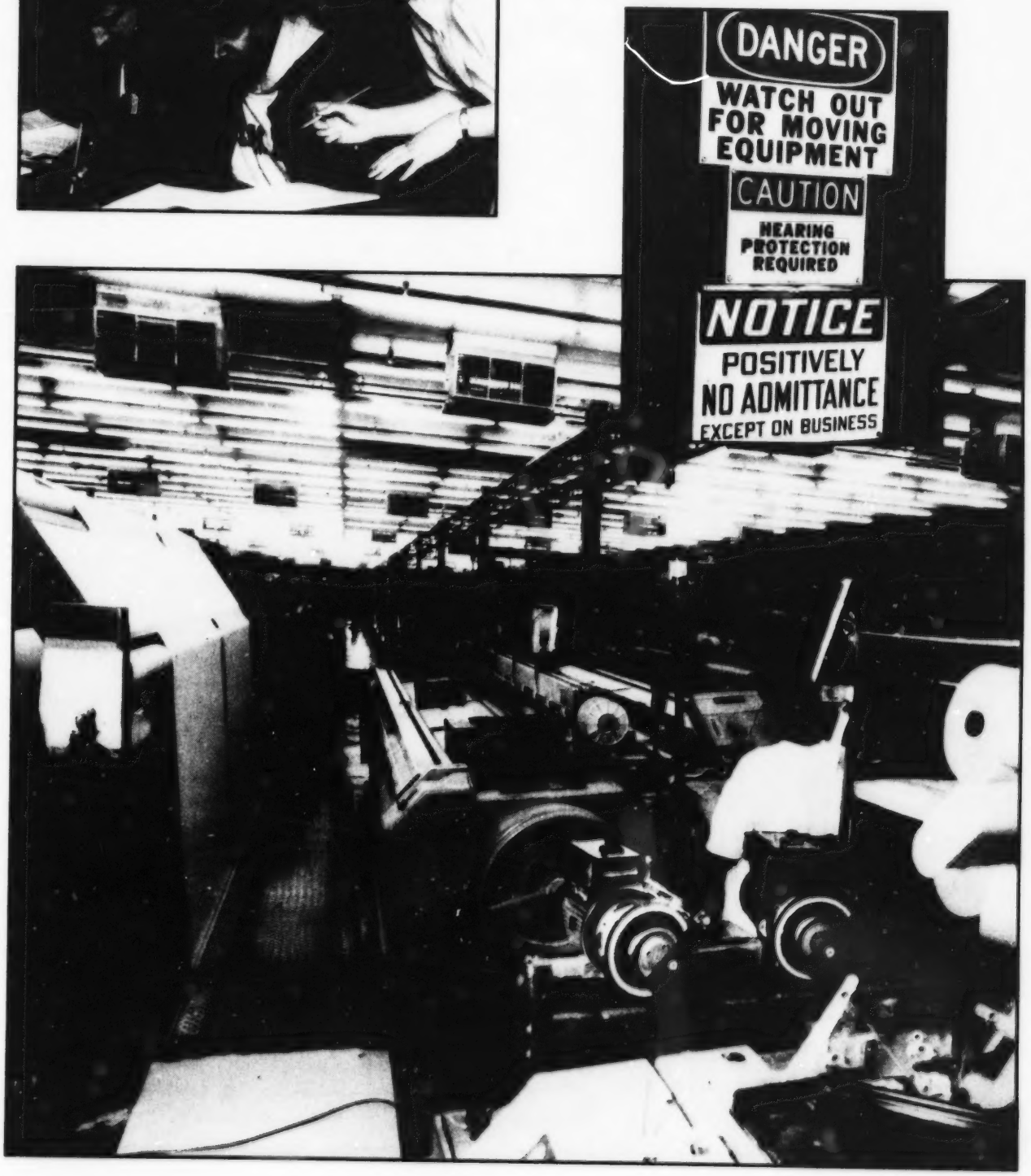
Goal: To develop writing skills.

Objective: To see an increased use of writing as a form of expression.

Goal: To increase co-operation among staff and to develop a positive attitude towards the workplace.

Objective: To provide outside opportunities for employees to work together.

6 Textile Mill



Program Summary

Five employees of a textile mill in southwest Nova Scotia took part in a three-month program. The men met on site twice a week for four hours to develop reading and writing skills relevant to their work and to their personal lives. Publicity for the course was done through the local literacy council as well as in the plant. Four of the five participants were already receiving outside tutoring through the literacy council. Management paid one hour at shift charge for some employees. The union local chose not to be involved with the development and delivery of the program.

In initial interviews, management personnel identified a need among employees for increased literacy skills in order to pass the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test, a benchmark for promotion in the plant. It was their concern that "all avenues of advancement" be open to the employees.

Interviews with employees revealed some frustration with the newly implemented pay cheque system which demanded a strong knowledge of computational skills. Employees also talked about their desire to fill out workplace forms properly, to understand health and safety materials, and to feel more comfortable with the variety of print posted in the workplace.

The program co-ordinator developed a curriculum to meet these needs and others. Test-taking skills were taught in order to help participants alleviate their anxiety around taking the Bennet Mechanical Comprehension Test. This test and the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) were administered at the beginning and at the end of the program. This was done to demystify the test-taking process as well as to assess and evaluate the participants' progress.

One man summed up the program in this way: "It's not one-to-one tutoring. Don't expect that, but don't expect a classroom situation either." Another man said that before the program, he used to rely on what other people taught him. Now, he can teach himself.

Statement of Process

The town in which this manufacturer is located has a population of 9,500 (1986c). The county has a population of 27,073 (1986c). Fifty-three percent of the labour force has not completed high school. Ten percent of the town's labour force is employed by this manufacturer. The manufacturing industry has the second highest worker participation rate in the county. Other significant employers in the area are a tin mine and the fishing industry on which the stability of the economy depends.

A native of this area, the program co-ordinator is actively involved in the local literacy council. She approached this company for two primary reasons. First, it is a focal point of the town. The plant physically occupies the centre of the town. It is considered a prominent landmark because of its size, its history and the number of people it employs. Second, the textile manufacturer had already expressed an interest in sponsoring some type of literacy work in conjunction with the literacy council.

The manufacturer's interest in sponsoring a workplace program stemed from its need to promote employees from within the business instead of hiring from without. It needed people already trained in the business. Often the geographical isolation of the area has prevented finding such people. Thus, the manufacturer has had to become as self-sufficient as possible, and was interested in sponsoring the program because it is a large company which treats it employees like individuals.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	An incorporated textile plant
Location	Southwest Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	United Textiles Workers of America
Product/Services	Woven fabrics of cotton and synthetic fibres, canvas, duck, industrial hose
General Information	The textile plant started in 1884 with 80 people and produced 900,000 yards of duck per annum. In 1902, the company was sold to an American company and renamed. In 1926, the company returned to Canadian ownership and finally, in 1973, the current textile company purchased the plant. It implemented a number of improvements. The plant now produces 823,000 metres of fabric daily and employs 440 people, 10% of the town's working population.
Employees	
a. total number	440
b. men	66%
c. women	34%
d. minorities	3.5%
e. age range	20 - 66 (33 is the average age)
f. required educational level	None
g. pay rate	$9.30/hour. Pay changes according to shift, length of employment and type of job.
Program Information	
a. number of courses	1
b. form of recruitment	Publicity through the local literacy council. Potential participants were approached by management. A bulletin was posted plant-wide.
c. day and time	Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 - 4:00pm
d. location	On site
e. number of sessions	25
f. total course hours	50
g. initial statement of needs	Management identified a need among employees for increased literacy skills in order to pass the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test, a benchmark for promotion.
h. management contribution	One hour time at shift change for some employees.
Participant Information	
a. number of participants	5
1. men	5
2. women	0
3. special needs	2 (1 Vietnamese, 1 blind in one eye)
4. age range	30 - 37 (average age 31)
b. attrition	One man dropped the course mid-way through because of a shift change.
c. last grade completed	1 - grade 2 1 - auxiliary 1 - grade 7 1 - grade 9 1 - grade 12 in his first language
d. how long out of school	1 - 24 years ; 1 - 14 years 1 - 15 years ; 1 - 13 years 1 - 16 years
e. previous upgrading	All participants, except the ESL student, were involved in one-on-one tutoring situations with the local literacy council. One man had completed a first aid course.

Organizational needs assessment

The needs assessment process at this textile manufacturer consisted of several interviews with the personnel manager and the training supervisor, a tour of the facilities, interviews with department heads and various shift supervisors, and numerous interviews with a cross section of employees. During this period, several meetings were arranged with the president of the local union, but these appointments never materialized.

Management personnel identified improved reading and writing of the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test as a possible focal point for a class. They also identified as needs the reading and understanding of machine manuals, filling out forms and, in general, understanding print in the workplace.

The tour of the plant and discussions with the training supervisor revealed that there was very little reading and writing directly involved in completing job tasks. The entire plant was operated in a highly automated fashion. The program co-ordinator observed a variety of written materials around the workplace, i.e. newsletters, notes posted on machines, hazard signs, etc. and concluded that a program geared towards helping employees feel more at ease with this print might be appropriate.

During employee interviews, the program co-ordinator discovered that false rumors were circulating about who she was and what the real purpose of the program was. Personal contact at this time enabled her to dispel the rumors and explain clearly the purpose of the program. The interviews confirmed many of the needs articulated in earlier management interviews. The desire of the employees for programming fell into two categories. Some wanted a basic skills upgrading course which dealt primarily with reading and writing. Others wanted a course on communication skills and various forms (income tax and insurance). The training supervisor preferred addressing the needs of the first group.

The primary obstacle to programming at the textile manufacturer was the time involved. When dealing with a company of this size, all levels of management had to be approached. Any one of these had the option to veto the program.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To improve literacy skills through the teaching of reading strategies.

Objective: To allow participants to apply independently context clues, predicting, scanning, etc. when reading.

Goal: To develop test-taking skills.

Objective: To alleviate test anxiety and develop confidence in such situations.

Goal: To increase the possibility of job advancement for participants.

Objective: To take and pass the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test.

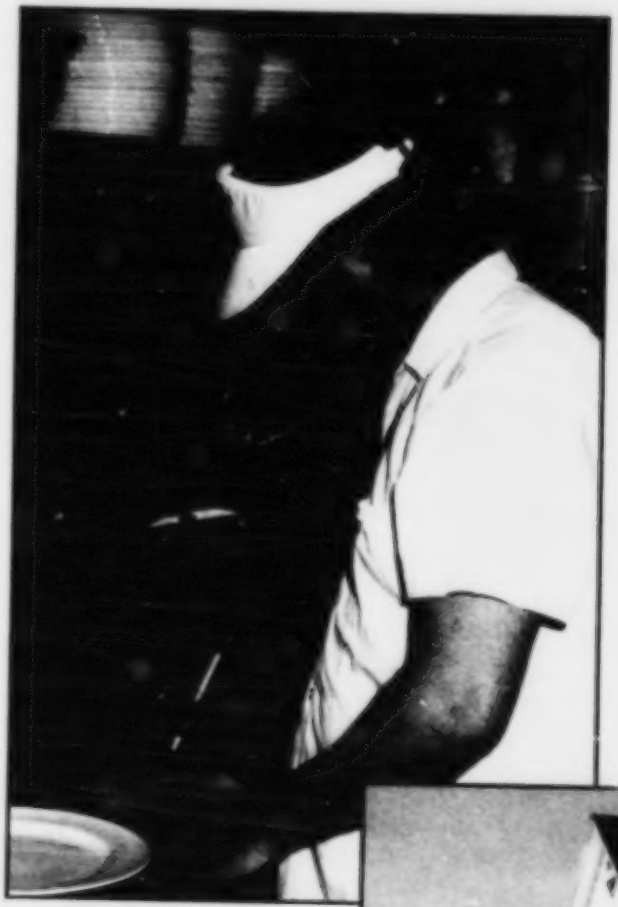
Goal: To improve communication and team building.

Objective: To encourage participants to use collective reasoning in problem-solving.

Goal: To develop confidence and creativity in situations involving writing.

Objective: To encourage writing through short exercises.

7 Motel and Dining Room



Program Summary

Two model programs were delivered to employees of a motel and dining room in Northwest Nova Scotia. During initial interviews, management identified a need for more effective communication among supervisors. Unsure about the benefit of bringing staff members together, they wanted to participate in a program themselves before offering it to the hourly paid staff.

Six supervisors met on company time once a week for a total of five weeks. During these sessions, they discussed the importance of written communication and ways it could be integrated more fully into their workplace. They participated in team building exercises and increased their awareness about each other's responsibilities. They also conducted two department head meetings during the program. These supervisors had difficulty meeting in the past. The staff now meet weekly. They have refined their meeting process as well as the follow up to the meetings. The success of this program paved the way for a second course offered to the hourly paid staff.

Four employees from various departments in the motel attended 10 two-hour sessions over a two-month period.They met to produce a booklet which describes how their work contributes to the efficiency of their motel. As they worked on their reading and writing skills, they gained confidence in their own abilities to handle new learning situations at home and in the workplace.

Both courses were implemented on a short term basis, and served to bring attention to the issue of workplace upgrading. Workers were made aware of resources available to meet their upgrading needs.

Statement of Process

The county in which the motel is located has a population of 35,000 (1986c). The town has a population of 9,700. Forty-nine percent of the county's labour force has not completed high school. The business and personal services industries have the highest worker participation rates in the area. The region has an unemployment rate which far exceeds the provincial average. The significant employers in the town are a communications company, an aerospace company and an engineering firm. The town is also a tourist stopping point.

The program co-ordinator, as a recognized member of the community, serves as the chairperson of the local literacy council. She selected the motel as a site for program delivery because she knew the manager to be a community-minded person. He has often provided meeting space for community groups and events. Other employers approached about the project were unable to work within the predetermined time period.

The manager sponsored the programs to encourage the personal development of employees. Benefits to the workplace were a natural result of the programs. The program co-ordinator developed a proposal for employees needing help with reading and writing to produce a booklet as part of an annual company competition for Property of the Year. Both the employer and the employees were enthusiastic about this proposal.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	A motel and dining room
Location	Northwest Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	None
Product/Services	93-room motel providing overnight accommodation, fine dining, meeting and convention facilities
General Information	In 1968, a 63-room facility was built to serve tourists, business people and the travelling public. In 1986, a 20-room expansion was added to the existing structure. The motel is one of 11 company-owned and seven franchised motels located in Eastern Canada. Head office for the motel chain is in New Brunswick.

Employees

a. number of employees	58
b. men	18
c. women	40
d. age range	30 is the average age
e. required educational level	Varies according to position
f. pay rate	—

Program Information

a. number of courses	2
b. form of recruitment	Information meeting and questionnaire
c. day and time	1. Monday, 10:00am-12:00pm 2. Tuesday, 2:00pm-4:00pm
d. location	Meeting room at the motel
e. number of sessions	1: 5 sessions ; 2: 10 sessions
f. total course hours	1: 10 hrs ; 2: 20 hrs
g. initial statement of needs	Management identified a need for more effective communication among supervisors. They wanted to participate in a program before offering it to hourly paid staff.
h. management contribution	Both courses were offered on company time.

Participant Information: Course 1

a. number of participants	6	
1. men	4	
2. women	2	
3. minorities	0	
4. age range	average age 30	
b. rate of attrition	0	
c. last grade completed	1 - grade 6	2 - grade 12
	1 - grade 10	2 - unknown
d. how long out of school	1 - 38 years	2 - 5 years
	1 - 12 years	2 - unknown
e. previous upgrading/coursework	One had taken a one-year accounting course. One had taken short courses in mechanics and blueprint reading. One had taken approximately 9 short courses in hotel food and beverage management. This person had also conducted workshops on food preparation.	
f. general information	Participants were willing to take the course but, because of past history, were doubtful that the course would be of benefit to them.	

Participant Information: Course 2

a. number of participants	4
1. men	1
2. women	3
3. age range	25-45
b. rate of attrition	0
c. last grade completed	None of the participants had completed high school.
d. how long out of school	1 - 6 years 1 - 10 years 1 - 25 years 1 - 30 years
e. previous upgrading/coursework	None of the participants had completed previous upgrading/coursework.
f. general information	All the participants were long-term employees and were very interested in a course that would introduce them to an area of learning previously unknown to them.

Organizational needs assessment

It was determined from the second meeting at the motel that the general manager and five supervisors wished to participate in a workplace upgrading program before offering it to the hourly paid staff. These employees noted that most instruction and reporting were carried out orally. They wanted to see more written communication, particularly a fuller use of the meeting book. They did not realize the extent of each other's work load. Previous attempts to conduct meetings had not met expectations. Although hesitant to acknowledge that a program could help, the supervisors agreed to participate in a program which would concentrate on building team work skills and proper meeting procedures.

Following the implementation of the supervisor program, the program co-ordinator proposed a program for the hourly paid staff. The general manager accepted her proposal of producing a booklet in connection with an annual company competition. She attended two staff meetings to get supervisor support. They in turn informed their departments of the program. Four employees expressed interest. One wanted to upgrade her writing skills. Another woman wanted to encourage her child's learning. The class decided to sponsor a competition among all employees to see who could come up with the best idea for improving customer service. These ideas would be included in the final booklet. The class extended an open invitation to any employees wishing to watch the progress of the project or to give their input to drop in during the last fifteen minutes of every class.

Program Goals and Objectives

Course 1

Goal: Interdepartmental written communication.

Objective: To learn how to conduct and participate in weekly staff meetings.

Objective: To develop the meeting book as a more useful communicative tool.

Goal: Teamwork among course participants.

Objective: To have participants engage in teambuilding exercises.

Course 2

Goal: Production of a booklet describing how the employees' work contributed to the efficiency of the workplace.

Objective: To help employees recognize how a booklet is produced.

Objective: To raise the employees' awareness of their workplace.

8 Publishing Company

Program Summary

Twenty-six employees of a publishing company in Southwest Nova Scotia participated in an eight-week model program which focused on proofreading skills. The company publishes and distributes five community newspapers in three counties as well as grocery flyers, brochures, community directories and yearbooks, and a weekly T.V. program guide. Participants attended weekly two-hour sessions at the local adult learning centre. One group met in the morning and one after lunch. Both courses took place on company time.

The program co-ordinator designed the curriculum to help employees from the page lay-out, ad lay-out and proofreading sections of the workplace to upgrade their skills in using and recognizing punctuation usage (as laid out in the Canadian Style Press Book), spelling and word usage. Participants worked with antonyms, synonyms and, in particular, homonyms in order to better understand the text being proofread. They also discussed producing print based on the principle of clear language and design.This involved looking at how space, type size, and visuals of a text can be used to convey information in the most readable, effective way possible.

Most participants had completed high school and a few had some post-secondary experience. This was not discovered until mid-way into the course, a fact which suggests a lack of employee input in the planning stages of the program. Despite the high educational level of the group, most participants still felt it useful to review the use of language as it relates to styles set out by the Canadian Press. One employee said, "I found these sessions quite useful for me. They have led to a better understanding of what a discerning reader might look for."

Statement of Process

This company serves three counties with a total population of 65,307 (1981c). The town in which it is located has a population of 9,500. Approximately 58% of the labour force in these three counties has not completed high school.

Originally, the program was management directed. It was later changed to meet more effectively the needs of the participants.

The employer was open to the idea of sponsoring a workplace program because her role in the project was made clear by the program co-ordinator. She was also interested in the program as a way to make the workforce more competitive. Since the company is owned out of province, it is imperative that it show a profit. Otherwise, services would be cut. The company must continue to prove that it is a viable operation. The employer was also motivated to sponsor a workplace program by her desire for the staff to put out a good quality paper.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	A publishing company
Location	Southwest Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	None
Product/Services	Regional newspapers
General Information	This publishing company started as a weekly town newspaper in 1966. In 1978, the paper was sold to an out-of-province publications company. The paper has enjoyed steady growth since that time. A modern printing plant was constructed in 1987. This operation is now a regional printing centre. It publishes for five counties regional newspapers, a T.V. program guide and commercial advertising supplements.
Employees	
a. total number	119
b. men	70%
c. women	30%
d. age range	approximately 20 - 55
e. required educational level	Grade 10
f. pay rate	—
Program Information	
a. number of courses	2
b. form of recruitment	Plant-wide publicity
c. day and time	Wednesday, 10:00am - 12:00pm Wednesday, 1:00pm - 3:00pm
d. location	Local adult learning centre
e. number of sessions	8
f. total course hours	16
g. initial statement of needs	Management felt too many spelling and grammatical mistakes were going unnoticed by the proofreading staff.
h. management contribution	Both courses met entirely on company time.
Participant Information	
a. number of participants	26
1. men	3
2. women	23
3. age range	approximately 20 - 55
b. rate of attrition	0
c. last grade completed	One had grade 8, one had grade 10 and one grade 11. All participants had completed high school. Some had post-secondary experience.
d. how long out of school	n/a
e. previous upgrading	None
f. general information	Employees from the proofreading, advertising layout and news composing departments took part in the course.

Organizational needs assessment

The organizational needs assessment process involved meetings with the general manager and supervisors of three departments, followed by group meetings with the employees of those departments. An interest survey designed to measure which proofreading skills employees wanted to work on the most was also distributed. The general manager emphasized several educational issues which concerned her at the time. She felt that spelling and grammatical mistakes were going by unnoticed, that spelling mistakes were developing at the proofreading stage because of Acadian speech patterns and that poor communication resulted in problems in the final ad formats.

The interest survey indicated three areas where upgrading was desired by the employees. First, the employees wanted to improve their spelling, punctuation, English usage, and vocabulary skills. Second, they wanted to develop some new proofreading strategies and techniques. Third, they wanted to be able to apply these new proofreading strategies and their knowledge of English mechanics to their work. From this input a curriculum was developed. The program co-ordinator met with three groups of employees and presented the proposed program. The entire advertising layout staff decided to participate. Six people from news composing and two people from customer service expressed interest.

Program goals and objectives

Goal: To enable employees to understand the text being composed or proofread.

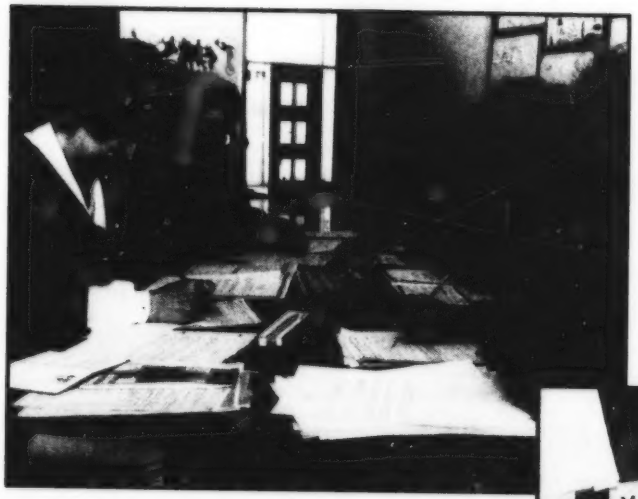
Objective: To understand correct word usage through a knowledge of antonyms, synonyms and homonyms.

Goal: To enable employees to recognize correct punctuation usage as established by the Canadian Style Press Book.

Goal: To become more familiar with effective text composition and layout.

Objective: To understand the principle of clear language and design.

Objective: To understand the relationship of space, type and visuals to a printed document.



9 Inshore Fishing Families

Program Summary

Three women in self-employed inshore fishing families on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia took part in a four-month model program which focused on problem-solving skills. Two women were wives of sharesmen and the third woman was married to a boat owner.

Initial contacts with the Fishermen's Protection Association and with the regional development commission identified a need among women in fishing families to understand the business aspect of fishing. The women themselves expressed particular frustration with understanding and using the Federal Fishing Income Tax Guide. Many found it intimidating to seek out information through the appropriate government departments.

To deal with these concerns, the women met two hours a week in a local village school. Using the Federal Income Tax Guide as a primary source, they discussed, solved problems, read and wrote about their bookkeeping concerns. In order to avoid personal divulging of income matters, the women objectified their situations with the creation of two imaginary fishermen, "George", a boat owner, and "Bill", a sharesman. The fishermen were equipped with incomes, subsidies, expenses and capital cost allowances. The women then solved problems around these using information from the guide. After working through what "George", for example, could claim for expenses, the women substituted their own experiences into the problems and worked them out at home.

These imaginary people helped to make the tax guide a readable, even liveable document for the women involved in the program.What was previously perceived as an inaccessible text is now approached with ease and confidence. One of the participants is now taking part in a Small Business Management Course sponsored by the Department of Fisheries. Another woman is registered in a pre-GED course.Two participants are considering filling out their own tax income forms this year and then taking them to a local tax clinic for checking.

Statement of Process

This program took place in a community where the fishing industry is the mainstay of the economy. Traditionally, inshore fishermen have worked the shoreline from April to October. These seven months were always enough to provide for families during the rest of the year. People somehow survived. Currently, however, reliance on seasonal work is becoming less and less feasible. With the decline in inshore fish stocks, more and more boat owners are electing to fish offshore during the winter. This activity increases the risk already characteristic of fishermen's work. Somehow, people are still surviving.

The Fishermen's Protection Association and the regional industrial training commission decided to sponsor a Small Business Management Course for non-fishing members of fishing families. The program co-ordinator, an educator whose husband comes from a fishing family, felt that some women might like to take a preparatory course first. Women who expressed interest in her idea wanted help with the Federal Fishing Income Tax Guide.

As little as ten years ago, wives in fishing families generally did the bookkeeping and completed the annual income tax forms for the business. As tax forms and guides became increasingly difficult, wives opted to turn their records over to an accountant. They feared making a mistake and then being audited.

Some of the women felt that they would like to have more control over what happens to their financial records. They realized that not knowing how income tax is determined lessens their control. Some have even been dissatisfied with the accountant's work. The course helped the women to understand what happened to their books once turned over to an accountant.

Workplace Program Profile

Employer	Self-employed inshore fishing families
Location	The Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia
Union/Staff Association	None
Product/Services	Groundfish and lobster
General Information	There are 17 boat owners and 10 sharesmen in this community of eight villages (pop. 600). The average number of men per boat is two. Small boat owners fish groundfish from April to November. Fishermen with larger boats fish year round. The lobster season goes from April to June. Fresh lobster and groundfish are generally sold to a local buyer in a nearby village. Some fish is salted and sold only once or twice a year.
Employees	
a. total number	27 fishermen and approximately 25 fishermen's wives in the community
b. men	27
c. women	25
d. age range	Early 20s to mid 60s
e. required educational level	None
f. pay rate	$600.00/week in season
Participant Information	
a. number of participants	3
1. men	0
2. women	3
4. age range	28 - 55
b. rate of attrition	0
c. last grade completed	2 - grade 10 1 - grade 11
d. how long out of school	Participants had been out of school from as little as 10 years to as many as 40 years.
e. previous upgrading/coursework	Three participants took the Small Fishing Business Management Course offered in 1983.
f. general information	One participant was married to a boat owner and two were married to sharesmen. One filled out her own income tax forms until 6 years ago. Two had never filled out their own forms but wanted to understand the process more completely.
Program Information	
a. number of courses	1
b. form of recruitment	Names of potential participants were collected through contacts with the local clergy and with representatives of the Fishermen's Protection Association and of the regional development commission.
c. day and time	Tuesday, 12:00 - 2:00pm
d. location	Local school in one of the villages
e. number of sessions	18
f. total course hours	36
g. initial statement of needs	The fishermen's wives all expressed frustration with understanding and using the income tax guide. They found it intimidating to seek out information even though they were aware of the appropriate government departments to contact.

Organizational needs assessment

The idea for a program came when the program co-ordinator heard that the Fishermen's Protection Association, in co-operation with the regional industrial training commission and with the Department of Fisheries, was planning to offer a Small Fishing Business Management Course in the spring of 1990. The development commission felt that women who had been out of school for a long time would like some preparatory classes to prepare them for the Small Business Management Course which involves quite intensive study.

A student at the Atlantic School of Theology expressed an interest in helping with the course. As part of her field work, she visited with the clergy in the area and gathered background information concerning the fishermen's wives. She talked with five clergy in what had been designated as the working area. Only one man actually gave her names. These were names from the community of the program co-ordinator. This area was pursued in light of the clergy's suggestion that the local school would be a suitable place for programming. Not dealing with an ordinary workplace with a classroom on site, space had become a primary concern. In a rural area, it is important to have a meeting place established. This is often a key factor when people decide to attend any event outside the home.

Following discussions with the local clergy, the program co-ordinator telephoned every fisherman's wife in the community. These calls were followed by a letter. The co-ordinator and student from AST completed a needs assessment when the class began. Only one woman came to the first class. Two more participants were gradually added. The class ended with three fishermen's wives, the AST student and the program co-ordinator.

In general, the women were not interested in preparing for the Small Fishing Business Management Course. They spoke instead of their desire to understand and use the Federal Fishing Income Tax Guide. Based on this need, a curriculum which centred on problem-solving, critical thinking and math skills was developed.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To increase fishermen's wives' ease and confidence in dealing with the business aspect of the family fishing industry.

Objective: To understand the Federal Fishing Income Tax Guide and how to use it in problem-solving.

Objective: To develop critical thinking skills for accessing information and for question formulation.

Goal: To create mutual support among fishermen's wives concerning fishing business issues.

Objective: To encourage personal and group writing which discusses feelings, experiences, etc.